

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA: I would like to know whether it is a fact that the exploration activities in the Bengal Basin have been stopped though there is a report that there are enough reserves of oil in the Bengal Basin. Recently, a report was submitted by Shri K.C. Roy Choudhary, to which a reference was made by Sh. Joshi also. The report says that there is enough reserve of oil in the country and we will not have to depend on imports of oil in future if we explore the oil in Bengal and Gujarat basins. May I know from the Minister whether the Government proposes to take up exploration activities in Bengal Basin because there is a report that Calcutta city itself is floating on oil.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: Sir, this topic has been discussed in this House time and again. It is not for the first time that the hon. Member is raising this question. He has raised it a number of times and on each occasion we have given reply. May I say Sir that it is not as if we do not want oil? We want oil. We are willing to explore and if Bengal is going to give us oil, we will do everything to find it out.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: The hon. Minister has informed us of some reasons for the shortfall, amongst which are reservoir constraints and slippages in projects. By a very rough estimate, placing the current value of oil at roughly 20 dollars per tonne, the loss that has been incurred by the country is around 200 million dollars. Therefore, I would request the Minister to elucidate the projects as to what are the reservoir constraints to which he referred and which of the projects in which there has been a slippage amounting to a loss to the nation of almost 200 million dollars.

SHRI S. KRISHNA KUMAR: In the relevant period, some of the fields in the Bombay High have been experiencing what are known as high gas-oil ratios and increased water cuts. A committee appointed by the Government called the Dasgupta Committee had gone into the rate of production from those wells and the criteria relating to proper well management and it had come

up with various recommendations. The problem is that there are many opinions. Some say that wells had been flogged too much in the past resulting in over production and negative health of the wells for the future. Some say, what had been done in the past is correct. This is a technical matter and the Dasgupta Committee has gone into it. But the fact remains that certain rectification measures are required to be taken now if the long term health of the wells is to be protected. ONGC is now engaged in the process of such rectification measures but that will result in loss of production in the interim period of two to three years which we just cannot avoid.

As regards slippages in projects we may mention that the Ravva field could not be cleared in time. There was delay obviously due to foreign exchange as well as resources scarcity and because of that the production from that field had to be postponed for quite some time. So, for every element of loss of production, there are valid circumstances over which the Government had no control at that time.

Sweet Water Prawn

*227. **SHRI BHAGEY GOBARDHAN:** Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the potential of sweet water prawn culture in the country;

(b) whether commercial production of prawn in sweet water has commenced anywhere in the country;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the areas which have the potential for commercial production?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN): (a) to (d). The potential for development of fresh-water prawn culture in the maritime States, particularly West Bengal, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Maharashtra and Gujarat

is good. However, commercial production in an organised way is yet to pick up due to *non-availability of seed in adequate quantities. The seed is now collected mainly from the estuaries in the above mentioned states. In order to augment the supply of seed and to demonstrate the technology of seed production, Government are establishing a large fresh water prawn hatchery in West Bengal with bilateral assistance. A few private hatcheries are also being set up for production of freshwater prawn in the private sector. The World bank assisted Shrimp and fish Culture Project in West Bengal envisages production of one crop of freshwater prawn.*

SHRI BHAGEY GOBARDHAN: Sir, admittedly fresh water prawn culture is yet to pick up but I had asked a question regarding the potential of sweet water or in other words non-brackish water prawn culture. I have got answer for brackish water prawn culture potential. Anyway, I am going to ask a supplementary.

May I know from the hon. Minister whether or not fresh water prawn culture is feasible in other States where water spread areas are available and what is the total water spread area available in the country for prawn culture?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR): Sir, my colleague has replied the question very rightly. I am sure the potential for development of fresh water prawn culture in maritime States especially, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Maharashtra and Gujarat is good. Point is, we have to start somewhere. If we do not start then we will not be able to reach our goal. We have to start with the primary stage. Our main problem is the availability of seed. They are available in the estuaries from where they are brought in the hatcheries and cultivated.

As stated by my colleague, we are going to invest money in the fish culture project and we will get assistance from other sources also. So, it is not that the project does not have any good prospect. Our fish production which was about 7.52 lakh tonnes

in 1951 has increased to 38 millions now. This is quite a good position. Our next target is to increase the fish production by another 9 million tonnes.

SHRI BHAGEY GOBARDHAN: The hon. Minister has stated that he had no other way out excepting answering the question in regard to brackish water fisheries. I have one point before I ask the second supplementary questions. I would like to stress that pisciculture or brawn culture have got three aspects. Firstly, full utilisation of waterspread areas that are available in the country. Secondly, self-employment. And thirdly, cheap supply of protein.

He has pointed out some things regarding hatchery and the production of seed. I would like to confine my supplementary to the seed production itself.

Sir, seed production also involves three aspects.

MR. SPEAKER: No. You do not have to give the information, you have to ask for the information.

SHRI BHAGEY GOBARDHAN: All right, Sir. If you do not permit, I will ask the supplementary itself.

May I know from the hon. Minister for Agriculture whether a long term cryo preservation technique is also being readied for transportation of prawn, seed or larvae to remote rural areas for prawn farming and to preserve them for long term duration to be used during off season also? If not, whether this aspect will be looked into seriously and necessary steps taken expeditiously by the Government?

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR: Sir, the hon. Member is very very right. He has hit the nail right on the head. That is the primary concern and we are going to do that; that entails the seed transfer. That is the most complex problem.

MR. SPEAKER: The reply is solidly positive.

SHRIBALRAM JAKHAR: That is right. We will do it.

SHRIMUMTAZ ANSARI: I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether there is any proposal for the development of prawn hatchery in Bihar which is adjacent to West Bengal. It is also interested in the development of prawn.

SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN: At the moment, there is no proposal to start a hatchery in the State of Bihar.

MR. SPEAKER: Only non-vegetarians will be allowed to ask questions!

SHRISRIKANTA JENA: It is good that the hon. Minister has said that the Government of India is going to take initiatives for the fresh water prawn culture.

May I know from the hon. Minister whether the proposal sent by the Orissa Government of India for brackish water prawn culture and also the sweet water prawn culture has been cleared or not and if not, will it be possible for the Government of India to clear the project soon?

MR. SPEAKER: This is a question restricted to Orissa. If you have the information you can give now.

SHRISRIKANTA JENA: Best prawns are available only in Orissa.

MR. SPEAKER: But the main question relates to the entire country as such.

SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN: The proposal had come from the state of Orissa and our Ministry did not clear that proposal.

SHRI ANBARASU ERA: Sir, I understand that recently a survey was conducted to have prawn culture in Tuticorin and in suburban area of Madras near Gummdipundi.

Further, I would like to inform the hon. Minister....(*Interruptions*).

MR. SPEAKER: No. You are prohibited from giving the information. You are allowed to ask the question. Please come to the question.

SHRI ANBARASU ERA: So, in view of the fact that there are large acres of land by the side of the sea in Tuticorin and near Gummdipundi, is there any project or proposal with the Ministry to have the prawn culture in these areas?

SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN: Sir, at the moment, we do not have any proposal to have any hatchery at Tuticorin. If such proposal comes from the State Government, we will definitely examine and possible steps will be taken by the Ministry.

MR. SPEAKER: Question No. 228.

SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN: Sir, I have to make one correction. The proposal from Orissa has come and we have just cleared the project.

MR. SPEAKER: Good. You have got a positive reply.

Coconut Development Board

*228 **SHRI THAYIL JOHN ANJALOSE:** Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the activities undertaken and results achieved by the Coconut Development Board during the last three years in Kerala; and

(b) the action plan drawn up for development of coconut plantations in Kerala?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN): (a) to (b). A Statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

(a) The development programmes and achievements of the Coconut Development Board, in Kerala, during the last three years are as follow:-